Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

71/10. Strengthening regional information and communications technology connectivity through the Asia-Pacific information superhighway

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Inspired by the global commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and sustainable information society,

Recognizing that information and communications technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to foster social and economic development towards an informed and knowledgeable society,

Recalling its resolution 69/10 of 1 May 2013 on promoting regional information and communications technology connectivity and building knowledge-networked societies in Asia and the Pacific, in particular the reaffirmation of the regional commitment to strengthening regional cooperation in information and communications technologies for development,

Recalling also its resolution 70/1 of 23 May 2014 on implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific, wherein members and associate members resolved to work together to pursue the development of seamless connectivity across the region in the areas of transport, energy and information and communications technologies,

Recalling further General Assembly resolution 69/204 of 19 December 2014, in which the Assembly expressed concerns regarding the digital divide in access to information and communications technologies and broadband connectivity among countries at different levels of development, emphasizing the special challenges faced in the area of broadband connectivity by developing countries, including the least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries,

1 See the Declaration of Principles adopted at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003, para. 1 (A/C.2/59/3, annex).
Recalling General Assembly resolution 69/137 of 12 December 2014, in which the Assembly endorsed the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, calling on the international community to support efforts by landlocked developing countries to develop their information and communications technology sectors,

Recognizing that landlocked developing countries lag behind other developing countries in terms of their telecommunications structure, including broadband Internet access, which can play a crucial role in boosting competitiveness of enterprises, facilitating international trade, increasing connectivity and fostering social and economic development,

Recognizing also that, given the vast landmass and diversity of the Asia-Pacific region, both land-based and sea-based fibre-optic cable networks play a critical role in developing a seamless regional information space, as various configurations and models of information and communications technology infrastructure deployment are viable,

Noting the ongoing development of the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway to improve the telecommunications connectivity between Asia and Europe and the support expressed by Member States for the project in General Assembly resolutions 64/186 of 21 December 2009, 67/194 of 21 December 2012 and 67/298 of 4 September 2013,

Recognizing that improved connectivity among Member States through well-developed infrastructure can be used effectively for environmental protection and disaster risk reduction, management and response, thereby protecting precious lives and the environment while contributing to the improvement of economic growth and living standards,

Underscoring the need to promote cross-sectoral collaboration to harness synergies, notably across the information and communications technology, energy and transport infrastructures,

Expressing appreciation for the creation of the regional map on land-based information and communications technology infrastructure developed in partnership with the International Telecommunication Union and the secretariat,

Taking note of the report of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology on its fourth session,2

1. Endorses the recommendations by the Committee on Information and Communications Technology:

   (a) To establish an open-ended working group on the Asia-Pacific information superhighway, to develop principles and norms, as well as a master plan, covering both the policy and technical aspects of the Asia-Pacific information superhighway;

   (b) That consideration be given to amending the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network so as to include co-habitation, as outlined in the outcomes of the Manila, Almaty and Paro expert consultations and that issues related to such amendments be dealt with through future meetings of the working groups on the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, as established under the respective agreements;

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2 E/ESCAP/71/18.
2. Encourages members and associate members to support the implementation of the above recommendations;

3. Requests the Executive Secretary:

(a) To promote the sharing of experiences, good practices and lessons learned in information and communications technology for disaster risk reduction, management and response, and building e-resilience;

(b) To provide the necessary support through, inter alia, the subregional offices, to facilitate the work of the open-ended working group on the Asia-Pacific information superhighway;

(c) To continue the fact-finding initiatives and analysis on the Asia-Pacific information superhighway, including by enhancing its maps, through partnerships with the International Telecommunication Union and regional policy research institutions;

(d) To continue working on the Asia-Pacific information superhighway in collaboration with international and regional partners, including the International Telecommunication Union, the World Bank, the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, the Trans-Eurasian Information Superhighway and the Asian Development Bank;

(e) To promote, in collaboration with national, regional and international development partners, civil society and the private sector, the exchange of best practices and experiences and knowledge related to the development of information and communications technology infrastructure, including in-depth analysis of the policy and regulatory barriers that may impede efforts to synchronize the deployment of infrastructure across the region in a seamless manner;

(f) To explore further ways to harness cross-sectoral synergies, including through the review of best practices to recommend solutions to leverage synergies among information and communications technology, energy and transport infrastructures across the region, including for the co-deployment of fibre along infrastructures;

(g) To report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on the implementation of the present resolution.

Fifth plenary meeting
29 May 2015